

Members

Sen. Sue Landske, Chairperson
Sen. Ron Alting
Sen. Joseph Zakas
Sen. Earline Rogers
Sen. William Alexa
Sen. Rose Ann Antich
Rep. Charlie Brown
Rep. Dan Stevenson
Rep. Linda Lawson
Rep. Ralph Ayres
Rep. Dan Dumezich
Rep. Dean Mock
Mayor Duane Dedelow



NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMISSION

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Authority: P.L. 149-1999

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 27, 2000
Meeting Time: 1:30 P.M.
Meeting Place: 33 East U.S. Highway 12, Board Room
Northern Indiana Commuter
Transportation District (NICTD) Office
Meeting City: Chesterton, Indiana 46304
Meeting Number: 4

Members Present: Sen. Sue Landske, Chair; Sen. Joseph Zakas; Sen. Earline Rogers; Sen. William Alexa; Sen. Rose Ann Antich; Rep. Charlie Brown; Rep. Dan Stevenson; Rep. Ralph Ayres; Rep. Dean Mock; Mayor Duane Dedelow, Mr. William Pemberton.

Members Absent: Sen. Ron Alting; Rep. Linda Lawson; Rep. Dan Dumezich.

Senator Landske, the Chair, opened the meeting at 1:40 p.m. She introduced Commission members and the staff. The Chair welcomed Mr. William Pemberton, City Councilman from Mishawaka. Mr. Pemberton was appointed to the Commission by the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). Mr. Pemberton replaced Mayor James Perron.

1. Dennis Rittenmeyer, Lake County Regional Transportation Committee (LCRTC)

Senator Landske called upon Dr. Dennis Rittenmeyer, President of Calumet College of St. Joseph, representing the LCRTC. In his presentation, Dr. Rittenmeyer told the Commission that the LCRTC advises and makes recommendations to the Lake County Council on transportation issues. Dr. Rittenmeyer said that the LCRTC is attempting to create a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), but the LCRTC has encountered a problem with a legal interpretation by the Lake County Attorney regarding the LCRTC's ability to create the RTA. Dr. Rittenmeyer also told the Commission that the LCRTC is pursuing public funding for the RTA. Dr. Rittenmeyer told the Commission that he is working with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Transportation

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Planning Commission (NIRPC) and using NIRPC excess grant funds.

In response to Commission questions, Dr. Rittenmeyer said that the composition of the LCRTC has made all parties unhappy. He continued by saying that regional transportation is something everyone wants, but for which no one wants to pay. Dr. Rittenmeyer then discussed regional transportation efforts in Kansas City and Washington D.C., observing that both of these regional transportation programs cross city, county and state boundaries. The Commission then engaged in a discussion of public funding for a regional transportation authority. In response to a Commission question about the meaning of public funds, Dr. Rittenmeyer said that it simply means public funding. In discussing about the problems with the Lake County Council, Commission member Mayor Dedelow said that the problem is created by the Council to avoid passage of the regional transportation authority. In response to a question from Senator Zakas, Mayor Dedelow said that the Lake County transportation systems are connected. Representative Stevenson commented that funding for a single area transportation system would not receive as much funding as a multi-unit system.

2. Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Technology

Senator Landske recognized Ms. Connie Vickery, representing USX. Ms. Vickery introduced Mr. Frank Clark, MagLev Inc. Also introduced were Mr. John Shortridge, Manager of Government Affairs of the USX Corporation and Mr. Michael Dixon, Manager of Public Affairs of the U.S. Steel Group. Mr. Clark presented a video on the concept of Magnetic Levitation technology. The video depicted the proposed maglev in Pittsburgh, PA. Called the Pennsylvania Project, this effort is the initial 47 mile alignment which will implement the first high speed maglev transportation system in the United States. The proposed corridor extends from the Pittsburgh International Airport to Greensburg, with stops in Downtown Pittsburgh and Monroeville, PA. According to Mr. Clark, this project would be the first step in creating a state and regional maglev system. Mr. Clark told the Commission that the Port Authority of Allegheny County, PA and MAGLEV, Inc. are working together to bring high speed maglev to Pennsylvania. However, Mr. Clark said that the Pennsylvania Project is only one of seven states competing for the nearly \$1 billion set forth by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA 21), approved by the Congress, and funded through the Federal Railroad Administration. Mr. Clark said that only one maglev site will be chosen for initial installation.

Continuing, Mr. Clark described maglev. Maglev is a form of high speed and guided ground transportation. It uses magnetic forces to suspend, guide, and propel passenger vehicles along an elevated guideway. Mr. Clark said that because the maglev propulsion system is built into the guideway, the vehicle is capable of running in the most inclement weather at speeds in excess of 240 mph. Maglev operates on basic electromagnetic principles. Mr. Clark said that the technology is provided by Transrapid International of Germany which has been in operation for almost one quarter of a century.

Mr. Clark said that to build the entire 47 mile segment would cost approximately \$1.8 billion, or about \$39 million per mile for the 47 miles. Mr. Clark said that it would take approximately five years to construct the 47 mile segment. Mr. Clark said that MAGLEV, Inc. has estimated ridership at 67,000 for the airport/downtown Pittsburgh route, with 50,900 for the downtown Pittsburgh and Monroeville route, and 14,500 for the Monroeville and Westmoreland County route.

3. Status of Proposed Hovercraft transportation from Northwest Indiana to Chicago

Senator Landske called upon staff to present its findings on the status of proposed Hovercraft transportation from Northwest Indiana to Chicago. The staff distributed a report entitled *Hovercraft Feasibility Analysis*. This analysis was completed by Mr. Ken Cypra for the

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC). This report was done in 1991. The report cited several markets which would make proposed Hovercraft transportation from Northwest Indiana to Chicago feasible, among those cited are: commuter, excursion, and transportation. The report defined a commuter market as one with a primary focus on the Chicago workplace. An excursion market was identified as one consisting of day-trippers and would operate primarily from Chicago to Northwestern Indiana. A transportation market was defined as one which simply uses the high speed waterborne transportation to transport an individual, an auto, and accompanying passengers between two points on Lake Michigan in lieu of driving between the two points.

The report also discussed facility availability for high speed waterborne traffic. The report commented that, at present, passenger waterborne service on the south end of Lake Michigan is limited to excursion service operating out Chicago and fishing charters operating from Northwestern Indiana. As a result, the report concluded, there is little in the way of passenger loading and unloading facilities.

The report identifies the development of marinas at Hammond, Portage, and Gary, coupled with the existing marinas at East Chicago and Michigan City as providing favorable environments in which to develop loading and unloading facilities. The report identifies loading facilities in Chicago at the Michigan Avenue Bridge. However, the report continues, to get to these facilities from Lake Michigan requires the transiting of the Chicago River lock. This is a time-consuming process, according to the report.

The report does not specifically identify any costs associated with Hovercraft transportation, but does comment that capital and operating costs must be enumerated for whatever high speed waterborne transportation is deemed feasible. The report also said that the origin of such funds must be determined.

The report discusses service development and integration by commenting that high speed waterborne transportation can and should compliment other forms of transportation within Northwest Indiana. The report mentioned that mariana development and casino development would be complemented by high speed waterborne transportation.

The report concludes by saying that implementation would be based on the answers to the questions posed above. After a brief discussion, the Commission thanked the staff for the presentation.

4. Proposed Resolutions

The Chair announced the next order of business would be the seven resolutions which the Commission asked the staff to prepare. The seven resolutions all addressed various aspects of transportation, both for Northwest Indiana and for Indiana generally.

RESOLUTIONS:

20011755 urges the Indiana General Assembly to appropriate funds into the Indiana Department of Transportation budget to assist in the establishment of a high speed rail passenger system. After a brief discussion and the changing of "to establish" to "assist in the establishment", the resolution passed by a vote of 11 to zero.

20011750 urges Congress and the President to establish a dedicated national funding mechanism for high speed passenger rail. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

20011690 urges the adoption of the Vision 2020 Plan of the Northwest Indiana Regional Transportation Plan. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

20011719 urges the establishment of adequate facilities and transportation to meet the increased usage of the South Shore Line to and from the Gary/Chicago Airport. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

20011727 endorses the Illiana Expressway. This expressway would connect I 57 in Illinois I 65 in Indiana. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

20011593 urges the Indiana General Assembly to appropriate funds to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District to purchase new overhead power distribution and signal/traffic management systems. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

20011660 urges the Indiana General Assembly to appropriate the funds necessary to implement the findings of the West Lake County Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS) conducted to analyze routing alternatives and select a preferred alignment for expanded commuter rail service from Northwest Indiana to Chicago's Central Area. After a brief discussion, the resolution passed 11 to zero.

Senator Landske asked the staff to convey the Commission's thanks to Pam Landwer of the LSA, drafter of the resolutions.

5. Virtual Weigh Stations

Senator Landske next called upon Ms. Kathy Noland, Director of Public and Legislative Affairs for the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and Lt. Guy Boruff of the Indiana State Police (ISP) Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section. In his Power Point presentation, Lt. Boruff explained that Virtual Weigh Stations use Weigh-In-Motions scales (WIMs) to screen a stream of traffic for excessively loaded vehicles. These WIMs are imbedded in the pavement and can measure the weight of each axle of every vehicle that passes over them. Electronic equipment in the scale's operating system can then classify each vehicle, measure its speed and determine if axle loads of gross vehicle weights are violated for that class of vehicle. This is all done in a matter of seconds, providing officers with an accurate method for determining which vehicles are breaking the law. The current practice is to either pull every truck into a weigh station or to guess at which trucks are non-compliant and then pull them over.

Lt. Boruff further said that the WIMs fit in with the overall strategic plan of the ISP to use permanent scales and mobile scales. Lt. Boruff told the Commission that trucks easily bypass fixed scales and that fixed scales are costly. He also said that the WIMs cost less to operate and are an unpredictable enforcement tool. By this, Lt. Boruff commented, enforcement officers can be positioned out of sight of the traffic being monitored. He said that compliance rates can be monitored and bridge wear can be studied better. Lt. Boruff also said that use of WIMs enables truck movement studies.

In his presentation, Lt. Boruff identified project actions to enable the WIMs to become a reality for Indiana. These actions are: 1) gain the INDOT Commissioner' approval; 2) identify the stakeholders in the use of WIMs; 3) define "manual" version functionality; 4) establish reasonable time frame; 5) prepare construction plans; 6) arrange funding; 7) build the system; 8) train operators; 9) operate system for a test period; 10) produce an evaluation report; 11) revisit next steps of Deployment Plan.

Lt. Boruff next identified the Operation Phase. This phase consists of Purdue University involvement, a fiscal year 2001 project, along with an appropriation of \$115,000 to study WIMs. The next part would include INDOT's building the WIMs. The ISP would utilize them and plan enforcement and Purdue would analyze and manage the database.

7. Interim Final Report

The Commission discussed the Interim Final Report and was told by the staff that today's activity would be part of the report. The Commission approved the Interim Final Report, including today's action.

8. Other Business

Senator Landske told the Commission that she was not planning to introduce legislation to extend the Commission after its termination on November 1, 2001. With no further business, Senator Landske adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.